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Writing Russian Women's Lives: Exploring the "Unwritten" Autobiographies of Karolina Pavlova and Olga Berrgoltts

Kristen Bleakley '95
Illinois Wesleyan University

Writing Russian Women's Lives: Exploring the "Unwritten" Autobiographies of Karolina Pavlova and Olga Berrgoltts

Kristen Bleakley and Marina Balina*,
Department of Foreign Languages
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* Faculty Supervisor

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* excerpts of poetry from *A Double Life* translated by Kristen Bleakley, unless otherwise noted.

I. Introduction

There have been many attempts in the literary world at creating a workable definition for the genre of autobiography. In her attempt to define this genre, Shari Benstock in "Authorizing the Autobiographical" addresses it as the attempt to recapture the self, to know the self through the conscious effort of writing (1041). George Gusdorf defines it as "the mirror in which the individual reflects his own image" when the "self" and the "reflection" coincide (Gusdorf, 33). Other literary scholars add various other qualifications to the definition of autobiography: that it must be a definitive chronicle of events in the author's life or that it must serve as a confession. As these specifications add up, the genre of autobiography in theory takes on a very structured form. In his theories on the origin and purpose behind autobiography, Gusdorf has placed rather narrow restrictions on the circumstances surrounding the formation of autobiography. In his *Conditions and Limits of Autobiography* suggests that "autobiography is not possible in a cultural landscape where consciousness of self does not...exist" (Friedman, 30). This theory implies that autobiography can only exist under certain circumstances in which there is a consciousness of the singularity of each individual. And not only must there be a consciousness of the individual, but there must also exist the conditions under which it is possible to pursue the *identity* of the individual: the "metaphysical conditions for the development of autobiography are ripe in a society that fosters the curiosity of the individual about himself, the wonder he feels about the mystery of his own destiny" (35). This would lead to the seemingly logical conclusion that if an individual lives in a society which for some reason, be it discrimination of race,

creed, color, or gender, denies the individual his or her pursuit of self and the right to express private thought, it is impossible for that person to create an autobiographical work. Gusdorf uses the models of women and minorities to support his theory. He argues that the emphasis on individualism required by autobiography ignores the importance of the culturally imposed identity for women and minorities. The genre of autobiography is non-applicable to these categories of people because they have no personal self-perception or personal identity. When an identity is imposed by society, the individual does not exist as a separate entity. It is diluted in a larger framework of stereotype, which is in itself an identity, but not a personal one, and therefore not capable of initiating autobiography.

The concept of Russian women's "unwritten" autobiography becomes multi-faceted in its illusiveness when looked at in light of the above-mentioned criteria. The term itself is seemingly contradictory. First of all, the idea of an "unwritten" autobiography clashes with the common perception that an autobiography must certainly be *written* by the author himself or herself. Second, the autobiography must be written with the intention of achieving a tangible end result or complete work. Third, the Russian women authors of the time periods focused on in this research would be incapable, according to Gusdorf, of creating autobiography due to the fact that individualistic ideologies did not exist in their favor in those societies at those particular points in time. For example, in 19th century Russia women were discouraged from pursuing creative intellectual activities. The stereotypical social roles of wife and mother were imposed upon them. If their interests lay outside of the home they were wont to sacrifice those interests in order to preserve favorable

public opinion, which they were dependent on for survival. Their private voices were sacrificed in favor of the public. This was hardly a society fostering "the curiosity of the individual about himself."

In the Soviet Union we see yet another aspect of society which severely restricted the introspection of the individual. This particular suppression was not gender based, however. Rather, it was based on the gender-indifferent ideology of socialism and the belief that the wants, needs, and desires of the individual must be subordinated to the best interests of society as a whole. The Soviet Party sought to incorporate a mass consciousness in a Utopian setting. This they hoped to accomplish by controlling the thoughts and ideas of the entire nation, making spiritual property public just as they had done with material property.

Based on this, it would seem that the emergence of Russian women's autobiography during these periods was unlikely. However, in this research I choose to support a different theory, that of Susan Friedman, which challenges Gusdorf's argument concerning the selective conditions necessary for the formation of autobiography. Friedman claims that the suppression of the individual does not suppress the ability, the inherent need of a person to undertake a search for personal identity. On the contrary, "...alienation from the historically imposed image of self is what motivates the writing, the creation of an alternate self in the autobiographical act. Writing the self shatters the cultural hall of mirrors and breaks the silence imposed by male speech" (Friedman, 41). Under the circumstances of individual oppression, the need to express that individuality is magnified. The search for a true self becomes of paramount importance to one upon

whom a false self has been imposed. Marina Balina in her article "Autobiographies of *Glasnost*" focuses here on the spiritual need for self definition in writing:

> ...the writer is concerned above all...with the question of who he or she, the author, is, and what he or she did not do in order to become the kind of person he or she intended to be in this life. Without trying to place the blame, in typical fashion, on society or on the historical course of events, the author tries to decipher his or her relationship with himself or herself and tries to understand where and how he or she lost his or her accountability to himself or herself" (Balina, 16).

Becoming public, however, is not always an option for the private voice of an individual. Such was the case with the autobiographical works of Karolina Pavlova and Olga Berrgoltts. While social and cultural standards in both instances could not entirely suppress the self-expression in their writings, it could and did affect its form, publicity, and acceptance by society. The pursuit of self in writing was forced to remain unrecognized. Neither Karolina Pavlova nor Olga Berrgoltts undertook the writing of any official form of autobiography due to the fact that their contemporaries did not recognize them as possessing an individual self worthy of examination. This judgment was imposed on both authors and resulted in the examination of self emerging in a slightly different form from that which was considered directly autobiographical. In the case of Karolina Pavlova, autobiography is woven throughout a short novel written in the third person. Olga Berrgoltts' autobiography is found scattered throughout numerous poems which remained for the most part buried in her diaries and unpublished.

It is the purpose of this research paper to search out the autobiographical elements in the works of Karolina Pavlova and Olga Berrgoltts and to analyze the methods of self-expression used in their "unwritten autobiographies."

II. A Brief History of 19th Century Russian Literature

It is interesting that some scholars of Russian Literature have placed Karolina Pavlova's works under the group of romanticism and others have opted to place them under prerealism or naturalism. For example, in A History of Russian Literature by Victor Terras one will find *A Dual Life* mentioned in the chapter entitled "The Romantic Period." On the other hand, in The Cambridge History of Russian Literature her works are described in an article by Richard Peace, "The Nineteenth Century: The Natural School and Its Aftermath, 1840-55." In which grouping should Pavlova be included? Granted, it is very difficult to draw lines dividing literary history. Certain authors and certain works do show distinct similarities and differences which makes it possible to roughly group them accordingly. But some cases, such as that of Karolina Pavlova, even this proves to be a complicated matter. Do her works have more in common with the romantic period, for example Alexander Pushkin's *Ruslan and Ludmilla* and Nikolai Gogol's *Dead Souls*? Or perhaps with the works of the naturalist or "prerealist" era, such as Ivan Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons* or Goncharov's *A Common Story*? There are traits of both trends in Pavlova's poetry and prose, describing the common ordeal of love and marriage in the aristocratic Russian society. In addition to this there is something more, something which is particular to Pavlova herself. There is a very unique insight into the life of a woman in the man's world of 19th century Russia. In this respect she has a style of her own which does not belong to that of romanticism or that of realism. Yet, it cannot be denied that both of these other trends had some influence on Pavlova's writing. To obtain a more complete image of her growth as a writer, we need, then, to take a brief look at the literary environments which surrounded her, namely romanticism and prerealism.

The age of romanticism, also known as "The Golden Age" of Russian poetry claimed such famous writers as Pushkin, Gogol, Fyodor Tyutchev, and Mikhail Lermontov. The earliest signs of romanticism are trace back to 1810 with the ariival in Russia of such French works as Madame de Stael's *De l'Allemagne* and J.C.L. Sismondi's *De la litterature du midid de l'Europe.* The Russian writer Konstantin Batyshkov wrote an essay entitled "On the Impressions and Life of the Poet" (published in *The Herald of Europe*) which uses the theories and ideas of these two writers to interpret poems of Lermontov, Gavrila Derzhavin and Vasily Zhukovsky (Terras, 177). Byron was another romantic writer who did a great impact on Russian romanticism. Pushkin was a fan of Byron and reflections of Byron's style can be seen in some of Pushkin's love sonnets. Both Madame de Stael and Byron were considered dangerous and immoral reading in Russia, but neverthless remained popular.

The political atmosphere in Russia during the first quarter of the 19th century provided the perfect "playground" for this new romantic strain of literature. Europe was still feeling the repercussions of the French Revolution and the various ideologies and philosophies from the restless part of the globe were constantly finding their way into the minds of the the aristocracy in Russia. Alexander I was intent on reforming legislative and administrative systems and the code of laws in order to keep up with the West. He was even considering the emancipation of the slaves, although this was not to become reality until 1863. He did establish a new state school system and funded several new universities. The resulting increase in the educated and their exposure to various schools of thought resulted in an ideal atmosphere for the influx of romanticism from the West. Unfortunately, this atmosphere was soon complicated by Napoleon's invasion of Russia in 1812. The csarist regime clamped down on the freedom of political thought and expression and backed out on promises of progressive

political policies. Censorship was imposed upon a portion of the intelligentsia which had already had a taste and feel of new political thought stemming from the French Revolution. But conspiratorial groups such as the Decembrists formed with the goal of promoting progressive policies concerning the serfs, law, legislature, etc. The main goal of the Decembrists was to depose Alexander I and place his brother, Constantine, on the throne, for Constantine was thought to be more liberal and thus more sympathetic towards the plight of the serfs (Terras, 169). The coup attempted by the Decembrists in 1825 was crushed and its participants were either executed or exiled to Siberia. Pushkin and Griboedov were close to the Decembrists and the causes for which they stood. They were spared from the unfortunate consequences of the coup only because they were not present in St. Petersburg that day. Nicholas I took the throne in 1925. His reign was a continuation of the repression present under Alexander I. Nicholas I was greatly opposed to the education of the serfs and considered education to be the root of all harmful radicalism. He did open new technical and teaching schools and even women's universities, but then the Minister of Public Instruction, Count S.S. Uvarov announced that all gymnasiums were "to be closed to all, save the children of nobles and state officals"(119). Strict regulations were forced upon the gymnasiums and universities concerning curriculum and size. No more than 300 students were to be enrolled in each school and courses were strictly monitored. Philosophy was entirely thrown out of the curriculum, along with foreign languages and literatures. Nicholas I suspected that the centers of the radical, revolutionary uprisings were located amidst the bright , young minds within the school system. He also established the police division Gendarmerie with the express purpose of repressing any expression of dissatisfaction or revolt (121). Yuri Samarin and Fyodor Dostoevsky were victims of this oppression when then Petrashevsky circle members were arrested

for "anti-government" actions in 1849. However, this increase in censorship and terror did not result in the suppression of literary and political thought. Writers, artists and politicians were simply forced to practice underground, out of the public's eye.

The romantic period in Russia was similar to the romantic period in the rest of Europe, with a few differences: Russian romanticism was a direct reaction against the established literary tradition which was upheld and endorsed by the csarist regime. It was intertwined with political events and thus stood as a sort of medium for political criticism. This is different from Western romanticism which was more concerned with abandoning the objective, classicist literary movement of the 18th century. The practice of using literature in Russia as a means of political criticism lasted until the advent of the symbolist and futurist movements after the turn of the century. Romanticism in general is usually divided into two groups: reactionary and progressive. Those Russian members of reactionary romanticism include writers such as Zhukovsky and Vladimir Odoevsky; their European counterparts would include Coleridge, Wordsworth and Walter Scott. Members of progressive romanticism in Russia include Pushkin and the Decembrists; their European counterparts include Byron, Hugo, and Shelley. Some common features of both groups are the importance of nationality, an emphasis on the individual (the poet's position in relation to the people), the poet's belief in intuitive powers, and the conception of literary works as symbols with "mythmaking potential" (Terras 176).

Poetry was the most popular medium of romanticism in 19th century Russia. The first widely acknowledged work of romanticism in verse is Pushkin's *Ruslan and Ludmilla* (1920). *Ruslan and Ludmilla* was profoundly new and different compared to the literature of the 18th century. Pushkin incorporated a growing awareness of nationalism by drawing on pieces of

traditional folklore and folksongs. He also radically changed the use of language. The traditional language of Russian aristocracy at that time was French. Pushkin used language ranging from Church Slavonic to vernacular Russian. Although he was highly criticisized for this "lowering" of the standards of language in literature, this trend caught on and today Pushkin is often said to have revolutionized the Russian language.

A significant change in the literary environment which occured during the romantic period was the appearance of literary circles. These circles were created in order to provide support and criticism for a literary world which was becoming more and more an important part of Russian culture. The growth in the literate population and the birth of a new middle class provided the perfect market for journalists, poets, and novelists. It became increasingly more possible to earn a living from writing. Karamzin had lighted the way to literary professionalism with his historical writings. Other authors in the Russian aristocracy were eager to follow him. Journals and almanacs were springing up both in St. Petersburg and in Moscow, each sporting its own group of writers and adhering to its own ideological standpoints.

These literary circles in 19th century Russia each had their own ideas and hopes for the future of Russian literature. The Shishkovians, for example, believed that literature should reach back to medieval Russian history and revive folk poetry. Members of this position included Pavel Katenin and Wilhelm Kuchelbecker. The Karamzinians, such as Zhukovsky and Pushkin, wanted Russian literature to join European literature without any concern for national originality, while the Decembrists declared that literature must have a civic mission to promote patriotism and responsibility. Members of this group who met in the circle "Union of Prosperity" included Kondraty Ryleev and Alexander Bestuchev. The Decembrists published two different journals between 1823 and

1825: "Pole Star" and "Mnemosyne." Westernizers held a very low opionion of Russian literature and favored that of the West instead (Pyotr Chaadaev,, Alexander Herzen, Vissarion Belinsky). The journals of the Westernizers were "National Annals" (edited by A. Kraevsky in the 1840s) and "The Contemporary" (headed by Pushkin in 1936). The Slavophiles sought a Russian identity in the world of literature, based on Byzantine Orthodoxy. Slavophiles published in "The European" (1832) and in "The Muscovite" (1841-1856).

The role of women writers in this "man's world" of literature and political philosophy was limited. That is not to say, though, that women writers did not exist. Wives and daughters of noblemen were usually educated at this time, and as mentioned above, a few universities were even open to them, although generally they were taught at home. These women often accompanied the men to literary salons and oftentimes played hostess. Madame Volkonskaya, wife of one of the Decembrists, hosted a literary salon which was visited by Pushkin and Pavlova. The Pavlovas themselves ran a salon which was frequented by Vysemsky, Baratynsky, Turgenev and Herzen. These women were literate and intelligent and exposed to that world of literature and philosophy which had for so long been monopolized by men. It was inevitable that they, too, began to write.

Through poetry and prose, women expressed their thoughts concerning society, politics, life and love. The most popular form of fiction in 1830s Russia was the society tale and this was true also for women writers. The society tale explored and criticized high society and its frivolity. The plot usually involved a countess or princess (married to an older, stupid, rich man) who falls in love with a young and intelligent but poor poet or artist (Mersereau, 163).

III. Karolina Pavlova and *A Double Life*

In the period between the death of Pushkin in 1837 and the rise of Dostoevsky, the literary limelight was shared by several talented writers: Ivan Turgenev, Nikolai Nekrasov, and Aleksei Konstantinovich Tolstoy, to name a few. With the death of Russia's greatest poet so fresh in everyone's memory, it could hardly be expected of the literary world to offer forth another to take his place. There was much speculation as to who the next Pushkin would be, but it seemed that no one could step forward. There were a few years of silence in respect. Karolina Karlovna Pavlova was one of the very talented poets of that period who wrote in the shadows. But this she did not out of reverence to Pushkin or for fear of not being good enough to step forward. Pavlova's reason for suppressing her talent came from the outside. None of her contemporaries wanted to recognize her gift in creative writing because she was a woman. As a result, Pavlova's life was filled with her own personal search for expression. She had an amazingly consistent desire to express herself through poetry, but few cared to listen. This search for identity as a poet was strongly linked to her search for identity as a woman in 19th century Russia. During that period, women's roles were highly defined and structured, leaving little room for those who aspired for more. Much of her poetry and especially her novel, *A Double Life,* are highly autobiographical. Pavlova, who was so uncertain of her identity as a woman poet, used *A Double Life* as a battle ground on which the many questions, uncertainties, and contradictions in her life fought. Pavlova was closely tied to her writing and used it to help dispell her apprehensions as a woman and a poet. To understand this connection between Pavlova and her works, we must analyze her biography, but first let us take a look at the role of a woman in 19th century Russia:

Women in 19th century Russia lived very structured lives. This was not a result of male dominance or suppression, but rather of years and years of ingrained tradition. Women's responsibilities included looking after the household and children and playing the role of the good hostess during social occasions. Women who pursued activites outside of this realm, such as pursuing a professional career or serving in the army, were considered oddities. Society at that time could not comprehend a woman who would want to do anything different than what women had been doing for years. Russian women usually married before they were 20 or 21 years of age. Girls were considered ready to be introduced to society at the age of 16, sometimes earlier. From then on, they were "on the market" to be married. Marriages were often arranged by the parents for financial or social reasons. Education was confined to the home for women until 1868, when college preparatory courses were opened to females in Moscow and St. Petersburg (Ransel, 56). Women often received very thorough educations from their parents and tutors, including the areas of science and mathematics as well as literature. Enlightened artists, philosophers, craftsmen and politicians returning to Russia from studies in Europe under Peter the Great had started this practice in the early 1700s. Women were encouraged to think and were praised for wit and ingenuity. A line still existed, however, between what was expected of women and what was seen as decidedly different and eccentric. For example, in Pavlova's major work, *A Double Life,* it is noted that "there were even women poets, but this was always presented.... as the most pathetic, abnormal thing, as a disastrous and dangerous illness."

Left with this kind of domestic life, women were forced to restrict their talents. Within certain areas, women did receive proper credit for talent. For example, women singers were given just praise for beautiful voices. Yet,

when it came to creative intellectual activity, doors were closed to women. This is not to say that women were not allowed to read and learn that which men had already created and established. On the contrary, they were encouraged to do so. The line was drawn there, though, and women were confined to the role of eternal reader. This eventually caused a conflict in society as those women who did read and did expand the horizons of their minds felt the inspiration to take the pen into their own hand and put their own thoughts and ideas on paper. Such a conflict is found in the life and creative works of Karolina Pavlova.

Karolina Karlovna Pavlova (Jaenisch) was born on July 10, 1807 in Yaroslavl. Her mother's ancestors came from France and England. Her father, K.I. Jaenisch, was German. Although a well educated doctor, he chose not to practice medicine, but instead taught physics and chemistry at the surgical academy in Moscow. Little is known of Karolina Pavlova's childhood, but her father took great interest in her education and saw to it that she was taught well at home. The War of 1812 undoubtedly had a great impact on her, for during the war, the Jaenisch home was burnt to the ground and their estate destroyed (Gromov, 6).

Pavlova's acquaintance with the Polish poet Adam Mitskevich played a significant role in her private and literary life. She met Mitskevich at the literary salon of Zinaida Volkonsky, one of the most famous creative centers, or "think tanks" of Russia in the 1820s. Numerous noteworthy personages frequented the Volkonsky's salon, including Alexander Pushkin, Anton Delvig, Peter Vyazemsky, Alexander Odoevsky and Dmitry Venevitinov. It was in this highly talented atmosphere that Pavlova met Mitskevich. The pretext for their initial introduction was Pavlova's desire to learn Polish. In addition to Russian, Pavlova already knew 6 other languages: German,

French, Italian, Dutch, Spanish, and Swedish. Mitskevich was hired as her tutor and before long a romance arose. Pavlova was only 19 years old when Mitskevich asked for her hand in marriage. Yet their relationship was ill-fated. Karolina's rich, childless uncle (who controlled the family wealth) was against the marriage and threatened to withdraw financial support from her family if she went through with the marriage. "Father was prepared to make this sacrifice for me, but I was not able to accept it. I followed that call of duty". Mitskevich left Moscow for an extended period of time (ten months) after Pavlova's uncle issued his ultimatum. Pavlova wrote Mitskevich imploring letters, asking him to "one way or the other, decide ...[her] fate". When compared with the thoughts and actions of Mitskevich, Pavlova's martyrdom and beseeching letters appear to be greatly romanticized. Her letters, in particular, have been described as being characterized by their "intensity, extravagence, and literary form of emotional expression", while Mitskevich admitted in a letter to a friend that there was "a complete absence of emotional shock" in his life concerning the affair (Gromov, 7). In 1829 Mitskevich returned to Moscow, offered Pavlova his friendship, and then left Russia forever. Pavlova's feelings for Mitskevich were very strong, very passionate, and brought out the life in both her letters and verse. Even in the final years of her life Pavlova thought back about her relationship with him and exclaimed, with the same dramatic intensity, "I love him now, all this time I never ceased to love him. He is mine, as he was mine at one time" (Russian text,7). In 1840, on the anniversary of Mitskevich's proposal (November 10, 1829), Pavlova dedicated an entire poem to him, inquiring if he remembered her and still loved her the way she still loved him:

> Amidst the bustle and in a crowded wasteland,
> Having abandoned your dreams and me,
> Do you have time to remember what was?

You haven't forgotten those precious days?
Tell me, have you thought lately once more,
That I, with a child's faith at that certain hour,
From your hands was ready to draw my lot,
Without fear to be forever doomed to you?
That moment that is sacred before God's providence,
When my soul, deeply in love,
Forcedly will say with persuasion
To a different soul: I believe in you!
That this beam, sent from heaven,-
On whatever path fate will lead,-
Like a living spark sleeps in a stone,
In coolness will sleep my heart;
That burden of sorrow will not destroy
In it this unearthly mystery;
That this seed will not rot
And will not blossom in a strange land.
Haven't you recalled how I, in the confusion of a ball,
Silently called myself yours?
How painfully my heart trembled,
How proudly the flame of eyes flared?
Rising above all of the cares of society,
Even though life took its own,
Does that moment still remain in you
Amidst your changeable entity?

Her relations with Mitskevich were closely tied with her discovery of the poet within herself. It was during that time that she started visiting Volkonsky's literary salon and her writing (prose, verse, and translation) greatly increased. It might be said that this significant transition in her life was what tied her so strongly to Mitskevich. He was the personification of her "good old days," the days when she was first introduced to the fascinating world of creative thought and literature, which would be dearly cherished for the rest of her life.

After relations with Mitskevich ended, events in Pavlova's life turned dark. Her rich uncle died and she became a wealthy, "available" woman in Moscow society. This proved to be a curse as she was pursued for her money and not for love. In 1837 she married the famous writer Nikolai Phillipovich Pavlov (1803-1864). Pavlov was born a serf, but after the manumission of his

family in 1811, received freedom and a good education. He was a translator and a critic, as well as a writer (Terras, 310). It was strongly rumored at the time that Nikolai Pavlov had only one thing in mind in marrying Karolina - money. B. N. Chicherin noted in his memoirs that "this marriage came to be not by means of love, but by means of calculation. Pavlov himself told me that he had committed only one act of villainy in his life: he married for money".

By the 1840s, Pavlova had well established herself as a talented translator. In 1833 she published a collection of her translations of Russian prose, "Das Nordeicht." Also, she published "Les Preludes," a collection of Russian, German, English, Italian, and Polish works translated into French. In these volumes of translations she included some of her own original poetry, but for this she was never highly recognized. Her fame stemmed almost entirely from her translations.

The Pavlovs hosted a literary salon in their house in Moscow from 1839 to 1844. The leading figures in Russian literary society would meet there on Thursday evenings: Evgeny Baratynsky, Turgenev, Nilolai Gogol, Gertzen, Polonsky, and others. There the two leading social factions, the Westernizers and the Slavophiles, would have discussions and heated debates. Pavlova faced a literary world comprised almost entirely of men, all of whom either criticised her poetry sharply or simply tolerated her literary attempts as one would those of a child. In this unencouraging environment she sought to justify and prove herself as a writer and poet. She was acquainted with the "best" of them, but was never permitted to bask in glory as they. She longed for approval from others. She needed it to prove to herself that she was a poet. And this approval she sought from that male population which was intimidated and angered by the female gender invading their realm. Yet her

thirst for literary existence drove her. She wrote to her contemporary, Evgeny Baratynsky, who once gave her a favorable review, "You have called me poet,/Liking my careless verse;/And I, warmed by your light,/Believe, then, in myself." (Heldt, iii).

Pavlova's contemporaries did not attempt to understand her as a person, an individual, and did not read her behavior in its proper context. Pavlova was defending her passion in life: poetry. She found comfort in this form of self expression and gladly occupied her entire life with it. To others, who did not understand her, this seemed very strange. To Pavlova herself, it was as natural as breathing. Many of her poems concern the role of the poet in society. The following takes a more personal viewpoint and describes the role of poetry in her own life:

> You, who are preserved as a beggar by heart,
> Hello to you, my sorrowful verse!
> My bright beam over the ashes
> Of bliss and happiness!
> What even sacrilege
> Could not touch in a temple;
> My misfortune! My treasure!
> My sacred craft!
>
> Awake, the word which kept silence!
> Fall from my lips again,
> O fateful blessing!
> Assuage insane murmuring.
> And doom my whole heart again
> To endless suffering,
> And to endless love!

Her passion was at once her "bright beam of bliss and happiness" and the cause of her "endless suffering," yet Pavlova was not able to abandon her "sacred craft"-- it was her life. Because of the fact that she so strongly identified herself with the poet inside, thus stepping over the boundaries of the acceped role of a woman, conflict naturally arose. What resulted was a distorted image

of Pavlova in the eyes of society. To them, she seemed obsessed with her goals, with "herself." Pavlova was born into 19th century Russian with a major disadvantage - she was female. Her gender denied her the recognition and respect that she would have had if she had been male. As it was, her writings were highly criticised as being very trite and "distinguished more by the beautiful sounds of the words than the poetic content"(Heldt, iv). This view was generally held by those of the utilitarian philosophy, who believed that sense should be superior to sound. Panaev and the literary journal, *The Contemporary*, were the chief critics of the Slavophile or "art for art's sake" philosophy. The Slavophiles respected Pavlova for her strongly nationalistic poetry and because she helped make Russian literature more widely known abroad through her translations. Yet even her friends held negative opinions of Pavlova as a poet. She was often criticized as being too pertinacious with her works, forcing them upon her visitors, eager for their approval. The influential editor I. I. Panaev misinterpreted this willingness to share and considered it highly negative in a woman: "Within five minutes I learned from Mrs. Pavlov that she had received much attention from Alexander (von) Humboldt and Goethe - and the latter had written some lines to her in her album....Within a quarter of an hour Karolina Karlovna was declaiming to me some verses translated by her from German and English...."(Heldt, iv). Ivan Aksakov visited Pavlova in Dresden in 1860 and noted similar behavior: "She is completely bold, merry, happy, self-satisfied to a high degree, and occupied only with herself....such a curious psychological subject....In this woman filled with talent everything is rubbish--there is nothing serious, profound, true and sincere - at the bottom there is an awful heartlessness, a dullness, a lack of development....Her sincerity of soul exists only in the form

of art, all of it has gone into poetry, into verse, instead of feeling there is a sort of external exaltation" (Heldt, 5).

Pavlova's relations with her husband also contributed to her being misunderstood. Nikolai Pavlov subscribed to the avante garde policies of the naturalist school of writing, which is defined by its portrayal of real life in stories. Their tales are "infused ... with sympathy and compassion for the lowly social underdog" (Terras, 310). In the case of many of Pavlov's writings in particular, there is a strong anti-serfdom theme. For example, his story entitled "The Nameday Party" tells of a serf who has fallen in love with a girl of the upper class. The only way for the hero to buy his freedom and marry the young woman is to join the army. He does so, yet upon his return finds that the object of his desire has already married another. "The Nameday Party" was a section of Pavlov's larger work, *Three Stories.* This compilation was very popular and represents the peak in Pavlov's literary career. Pavlov was highly persecuted by the tsarist regime for the abolitionist themes present in his stories. Because of this, Nikolai Pavlov was a martyr in the eyes of society, suffering for the sake of his ideals. After *Three Stories,* his reputation fell and he became increasingly jealous of his wife's climbing popularity (Gromov, 8).

The image of Nikolai Pavlov in the eyes of Karolina Pavlova varied much from that image established by the public. He had arranged a second household with his wife's distant cousin, who Karolina had earlier taken in and supported (Heldt, iii). This extra financial burden, along with his political persecution, had caused an increased need for money and he began to gamble. Pavlova's money steadily disappeared, sometimes at the rate of 10 or 15 thousand rubles a night. In 1853 Pavlova's family eventually took action against her husband after he secretly mortgaged her property. Seeing her

estate dwindling away to nothing, one of Pavlova's relatives had complained to a certain General Zakrevsky in Moscow, who had a personal vendetta against Pavlov for a derogatory epigram he had written. General Zakrevsky ordered a search of Pavlov's quarters and found various forbidden literatures. Pavlov was arrested and exiled, but soon returned to Moscow by the demand of his influencial friends. Pavlova suffered the consequences of this unfortunate chain of events. Many of those same friends turned against Pavlova because of her action against her husband. To them, Pavlov was a symbol of the abolitionist cause and was revered (Heldt, iv). Her position in society deteriorated rapidly.

In 1853, after parting with her husband, Pavlova left Moscow for Petersburg, where her father had died of a cholera epidemic. To avoid contracting the illness, she did not attend his funeral, but was scorned because of her "disrespectful" behavior. She then lived in Dorpat with her mother and son, Ippolit. There she met and fell in love with a law student 25 years younger than she, Boris Utin. Her poetic inspiration was once again aroused. In that year, 1854, Pavlova wrote a poem about this new-found love:

> Strange, the way we met. In a drawing room circle
> With its empty conversation,
> Almost furtively, not knowing one another,
> We guessed at our kinship.
> And we realized our souls' likeness
> Not by passionate words tumbling at
> random from our lips,
> But by mind answering mind,
> And the gleam of hidden thoughts...(Heldt vi)

In 1858 Pavlova settled in Dresden. Her son, Ippolit, had gone back to Russia in 1854 to live with his father and to attend the university in Moscow. She lived on a very strict budget, but continued to write. Her work was ultimately

her closest companion and she cherished it dearly. Pavlova remained in Dresden, estranged from her home country, until her death in 1893.

The main character of *A Double Life*, Cecily von Lindenborn, leads a life which is strikingly similar to that of Pavlova herself. Cecily, a wealthy, eligible young woman, has been raised under the strict supervision of her mother, Vera Vladimirovna. Vera Vladimirovna is a skilled entertainer whose life consists of gossipping and throwing parties for her friends and acquaintances. She calculates every social move in order to advance her reputation. She raised Cecily to act according to the social norms. As Vera Vladimirovna remarked to her friend, Madame Valitsky, "Yes, I must say that my efforts have not failed: Cecily is exactly what I wanted to make of her. Daydreaming is completely foreign to her; I knew how to make reasoning important to her and she will never pursue empty fantasies, but of course, I haven't, so to speak, taken my eyes off of her" (*A Double Life*, 240). Vera Vladimirovna's next step is to make sure that Cecily is successfully married off, fulfilling her duty as a mother. Cecily is but a pawn to be used by her mother and her only friend, Olga (Madame Valitsky's daughter) is also a pawn. Because they both have only marriage, children and socializing to look forward to they are completely preoccupied with the business at hand: courtship. Together they attend balls and dances in Moscow and rural Petersburg and catch in their sights two eligible young bachelors, Prince Victor and Dmitry Ivachinsky. Madame Valitsky has already made plans for Olga to marry the rich and suave Prince Victor. Thus, she and Olga somewhat ruthlessly steer trusting Cecily out of the way and into the arms of Dmitry Ivachinsky, who can barely support himself. By shrewdly convincing Vera Vladimirovna that Dmitry would make a suitable husband for Cecily, Madame Stravinsky clears the way for Olga and Prince Victor. Her attempts

are ultimately in vain, though, as Prince Victor decides to leave the country. It is then revealed that Dmitry had only wanted Cecily for her money (echoing Karolina Pavlova's real life relationship with Pavlov). At a drunken bachelor's party Dmitry is asked, "Are you really parting with the joys of life that you're drinking so desperately?" Ivachinsky replies, "I see that you're drunk....because you're speaking such absurdities" (300). Both Cecily and her mother had been fooled into thinking that Ivachinsky was truly in love and thus excused his financial state.

Cecily's story presents Pavlova's theory of the "double life," a theory also reflected in Pavlova's poems on the relationship between society and the poet. Cecily is used to illustrate the two sides that every person has: the outer, social life and the inner, personal life. A person has certain "social ties" and a certain "place in society," and at the same time has a place within him/herself. This inner "depth of soul" is "inaccessible to other people and to society." This is not to say, though, that the outer life has no effect on a person. Rather, "social life is completely real and affects a person, but in a completely non-spiritual way" (Gromov, 30). The two sides are inseparable and intricately intertwined, yet directly inaccessible to one another. The above outline of events in Cecily's life are, obviously, the social side of her identity. Let us now take a look at the second, inner side of Cecily's identity, which is portrayed in the novel by her dreams:

Cecily's dreams are a thread of truth and inspiration in *A Double Life.* They represent the side of Cecily which society does not see, her spiritual side. Her dreams are her creations. They constitute her own private world which she inhabits against the will of her mother, much in the same way that Pavlova herself is a poet against the will of the Russian public.

After days of tiresome socializing and going to balls, Cecily lies down to bed and is visited by a "supernatural presence." Pavlova uses poetry as the medium through which to express this mysterious other side to Cecily. The poetic dreams act as a prism through which her life is refracted into its separate elements: the lies, the truths, the joys and the sorrows. Only in sleep is she free to truly understand these things. Her dreams enlighten her with the truth of her role as a woman and describe the death, the breaking of another young, female spirit. From the very beginning, Cecily's (Pavlova's) dreams carry with them a feeling of inevitable doom. It is as if her fate has already been decided. This was exactly what Pavlova was fighting against with her determination to become a poet. She strove to break that mold which had been cast centuries ago for all Russian women; she sought to reconcile her inner, spiritual being (which was tied to her poetry) with society. Yet Cecily's dreams, her inner self, are closely intertwined with her outer life and her only hope lies in spiritual reward after death for her sacrifices in the material world:

> ...Understand that God's will
> has doomed you, defenseless ones
> To unconditional patience,
> To matters higher than those of earth.
> Learn, wife, how wives suffer,
> Know that she is humble
> To her dreams, to her desires
> She needs not search for a path;
> That her heart murmurs in vain,
> That her duty is inexorable,
> That all of her soul is under his power,
> That her thoughts are shackled by him.
> To mute tears, to an unknown struggle
> Prepare all of your young strength,
> And let our Heavenly Father
> Give you unconquerable love! (276)

Later on, Pavlova directly parallels the female role of suffering and sacrifice with that of a poet. It is obvious that she is deeply troubled by society's lack of individual spiritual interest. She believes that people are much too caught up in materialism and that those people who do trouble themselves with higher thoughts and principles suffer from neglect as a result. Yet, she emphasizes that poets must continue to create, for somewhere there is someone who understands:

> They walk amidst the shaken,
> Throwing their loud verses to the world;
> To them songs are more important than earthly gifts,
> Their conviction has no answer,
> Their inspiration has no reward;
> But, inaccesible are the powers of the earth,
> They sing, they create
> Not for the empty pleasures of the crowds:
> For them this life of wonders is futile,
> And myriads of stars shine,
> And the sun shines in the sky,-
> But so that people, feeling this mystery,
> Will not be able to reject it;
> But so that the poet's alleluias
> Rise above this grumbling earth.
> Because for the universe this is
> An inexhaustible blessing;
> That every there are sacred gifts,
> Where there is someone to understand them...

Even in these magnificent, truth-revealing dreams Cecily is denied her individual identity. Instead of emerging entirely from her own supressed creativity and ideas, her dreams, or "visions," are apparently bestowed on her by another supernatural presence which, ironically, is male in gender. Highly indicative of the dependency of women upon men in 19th century Russia, this presence is an interesting combination of personalities and influences in the lives of both Cecily and Pavlova herself. In Cecily's dream he opens her eyes and shows her the plight she has in life and teaches her to be strong and

withstand her earthly trials. The identity of this presence is not revealed. At times it seems to represent the person that Cecily could be if she were free to explore her own identity. At other times it seems to take on the qualities of the man of Cecily's dreams: a man who would understand her and truly love her:

> As if a miracle had happened...
> "Yes, like last night, - you're here...you're with me again!"
> - "Again I am with you! I will be faithful to you;
> I waited for you, - I am summoned, I am yours."
> - "Who are you?"
> "I am that which you searched for
> In the radiance of the starry heavens;
> I am your sadness in the midst of a noisy ball,
> I am the sacrament of your dreams,
> Which with your mind you could not grasp,
> Which you understood with your heart.

There is also a strong spiritual angle that often creeps in, leading the reader to suppose that the presence is Christ-like. Take, for example, the following excerpt from Cecily's first dream, which she has after one of her mother's little soirés:

> He is reflected in her thoughts like in a mirror,
> Like the sparkle of a star on a mirror of water.
> He stands full of stern might,
> Stands tranquily and silently;
> He looks into her eyes with his eyes,
> He looks into her soul with his soul.
> What blame, what blunder
> Did reproach knit his brow?
> On the face without a smile What a sorrowful love!
> What weighted this virgin's breast so heavily,
> What inevitable sentence?
> She goes - goes involuntarily
> Through this mute expanse,
> There, where powerful and rueful
> That glance sparkles like a summons, -
> And she stood before an unknown might,
> Having bent her humble head.
> And a word fell from his lips,
> Sadder than the chant of distant streams;

It was as if her young forehead
Was touched by a tender kiss. (236-7)

"He," that is, the presence, shines like the reflection of a star on water. Light has long been used as a symbol of truth and of guidance and of God. Furthermore, the presence knows her and understands her thoroughly. *He* is able to see into her soul and recognize her as no human ever could. Cecily is described as an innocent virgin, involuntarily traveling in the materialistic, superficial world. She is a mere child who does not understand the unfairness and triteness of her life. The presence stands before her, all-knowing, all-mighty, and speaks. What does he say? Pavlova does not tell us, but by following the spiritual trend in this passage it could easily be interpretted as a blessing or even a calling: a shepherd calling one of his flock. Whatever the word was, Pavlova writes that it was like a "tender kiss" on Cecily's bowed forehead, indicating comfort, acceptance, and/or forgiveness, all of which can be interpreted as qualities of God.

The spiritual theme is continued in the story as events worsen. As the events draw to a close and Cecily's wedding day draws near, her dreams become more and more morose. They depict a death - the death of Cecily. This is, of course, not a physical death, but the death of her spirit. It is described in the fifth dream, which Cecily sees after a day of accepting visitors at home and hearing about the death of one of the local women. This woman had been completely in love with her husband, who treated her badly and did not return her affection. The gossips discussing the death blamed the woman for her own sorrow. They claimed she should not have let herself love her husband so much. Cecily wrestles with this confusing argument in her dream:

...Who is to blame that she had not the strength
To face the path, measure its steepness,

Not to expect miracles, understand people from the first
And count only on herself!...

Stronger than insult, stronger than deception
Was the sacred passion of love in her.
Her wound could not subside,
Her sad gift could not disappear.
Who knew in that falsely rigorous world
Where grief is shameful and a joke,
How inconsolably she wept,
Resigned, before God,
What sacrifices she made,
What questions filled her heart,
In how severe a storm her soul
After a long struggle was torn apart?
No! If one has searched obscurely
For something which in life cannot be found,
If after hundreds of deceptions
One still could keep a blessed hope intact,
And measure with his soul on earth
A surfeit of those superearthly powers,
One is not quilty because he has believed,
One is not quilty because he has loved.

In Cecily's fourth dream, the presence takes on the characteristics of a relentless tutor, lecturing Cecily on her role in life and telling her how to live. This is the voice of society, of generations of women who have accepted the lifestyle dictated to them by cultural history:

"What do you seek, heedless young girl?
Look around at what the world frets over!
Devoting all its life to a phantom,
You do the same; find yourself an idol!

And clothe it with your reveries
And wait for happiness, stubborn child!
It will answer the soul's passion, the heart's outpourings
By being bored or by joking.

At times your love will be rewarded
With a distracted, hurried kiss.
You are a woman! Learn to control yourself,
Close your lips and chain your soul.

Hold back your passion and its sounds
Teach your tears not to flow.
You are a woman! Live without defenses,
Without caprice, without will, without hope....

The tone in these few stanzas is obviously one of bitterness and sarcasm. Through Cecily Pavlova is mocking the voices and opinions that she is surrounded by in her life. From her writing career to her personal life, people were telling her to be quiet and challenge the established norms. Women were supposed to hide their emotions and busy themselves with unimportant trifles. Anna Evdokimovna Labzina (1758-1828), who wrote a 100 page autobiography detailing the role of woman and wife in Russia, recalls in her memoirs the following wedding-day advice from her mother: "Even if he were evil to you, you should bear it patiently and please him, and complain to no one: people will not help you, and you will only advertise his vices and bring shame upon him and yourself" (Terrible Perfection, 78). This traditional mentality, which was passed down from mother to daughter over centuries, is brought under question by Pavlova through Cecily. At the end of the fourth dream, the sarcasm has exhausted itself and a glimmer of the innocent child shines through, asking "why?":

And at the end of the oppressive journey
Ask why there are so many wearying days,
Why the creator's orders are so stern
And why the lot of the powerless still harder.

The conclusion of *A Double Life* could very easily and successfully be adapted to the stage. One can envision an empty church after a wedding: flowers strewn about, a few petals smashed into the floor, the smell of mixed perfumes and incense in the air. The cries of the coachmen fading into the distance....and then silence. Only the faint shuffling of the clergyman's feet as he extinguishes the candles....and then darkness: "...the church...stood dark

and silent on the wide, empty street. Slow, heavy, menacing clouds passed overhead and were carried who knows where." Then a voice. The last poem of the novel is not a dream. Cecily, the dreams' medium, has left. This last voice is that of Pavlova herself, bringing out the autobiographical voice of the novel as she comes to terms with and accepts her plight in life:

> I am weighed down with impotent striving,
> I am full of heavy question.
> Consciousness alone lives in my soul,
> The only strength, and may it never die!
>
> Then let the future threaten loss,
> And the heart's dreams grow thinner every day;
> Let me pay a woeful price
> For the bright gifts of my youth;
>
> Let me throw treasure after treasure
> Into the stormy depths of the sea of life;
> Blessed is he who, arguing with the storm,
> Can salvage something precious for himself.

The tragedy in Pavlova's/Cecily's life was that the inner self was not reconcilable with the outer self. This inevitably resulted in the necessity to choose between the two. In Cecily's case, the inner, spiritual self was abandoned and she accepted the role which society had predetermined for her. Yet Cecily was left with nothing that was her own. Her personal, individual identity was lost. What remained was not really her, but a frame which society (and Cecily herself) mistook for being Cecily. In Pavlova's case, the outer, material world was abandoned and she chose to devote herself entirely to her "sacred craft." She thus preserved her own personal identity and left society with a distorted image of herself: another mistaken identity.

Pavlova has woven an intricate web of dreams and reality in *A Double Life.* The dreams, written in poetry, and the framework of social events, written in prose, each connect to and support one another. The two cannot be

separated. Without the objective prose, the poetry would not carry as much weight and the novel would collapse. The emotional message would lose too much of its impact without the storyline as its link to reality. Likewise, the prose without the poetry would be nothing but a typical romance novel. Ironically enough, it was precisely the simple story of courtship and life in upper class Russia which the public enjoyed and commented favorably upon. Critics generally skimmed over the poetry in the novel, just as they had done with Pavlova's previous poetical attempts.

The right to feel, the right to express herself, and the right to be an individual were the things which Pavlova sought in her life, but which were denied her by the environment in which she lived. As a result, she felt a great restlessness and discontent with her life. She was stifled. She looked around herself and saw that all women in her society were in the same situation. Some of them gave up, some of them looked for different means of self expression, but Pavlova's talents and her worldly view could not be content in that controlled environment and she opted to sacrifice her financial security and social approval in favor of her pursuit of self. In her final years Pavlova was living alone and on a very strict budget. She was almost completely forgotten by her homeland. The alienation she experienced gave rise to a further introspection which, in turn, contributed to Pavlova's desire to express her identity in writing. A brilliant translator and a progressive, creative poet, Karolina Pavlova should have played a more prominent role in literary history of her time. Her contemporaries, however, did not consider her worthy or recognize her private self.

IV. **Mikhail Bakhtin's Theory on Identity**

The second part of my research revolves around the "autobiographical" poetry of Olga Berrgoltts, written from 1926-1945. This focus of this section will be primarily on her war poetry which she wrote during the 900-day siege of Leningrad (1941-1944). Her verses, with the exception of one, remain untranslated into English and many of the Russian manuscripts have been lost due to Soviet post-war attempts at destroying evidence of the horrible realities of Leningrad under siege. Berrgoltts herself gave away many of her original manuscripts to friends and acquaintances, thus scattering them through Leningrad and the Soviet Union. With the Russian texts available to me I have attempted to reconstruct Berrgoltts' "autobiography" and analyze the relationship in her life between the public and the private. I found it of great help here to use the theories of Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975) concerning identity and the difference between public and private spheres within the individual. The theories shed light on the causes of the separation between the two spheres and help to differentiate within Berrgoltts' poetry that which is truly autobiographical and that which should rather be referred to as merely biographical, having been inspired not from within the writer, but from without.

Mikhail Bakhtin has presented in his "The Philosophy of the Act" a theory of self-identity which is based on the contrast between one's relationship with society and with oneself. The theory is in essence an attack on theoretism--"a way of thinking that abstracts from concrete human actions all that is generalizable, takes that abstraction as a whole, transforms the abstraction into a set of rules, and then

derives norms from those rules." This process, Bakhtin asserts, overlooks what he considers to be the most important factor in morality and that is "eventness" (*sobyiinost'*). By establishing rules and morals drawn from abstract generalizations, the essential meaning of action is lost, because action is defined largely by its individual context. "Eventness is always particular, and never exhaustively describable in terms of rules...even if we did obey those rules, we would still not necessarily be behaving ethically, for ethics is not a matter of rules" (Morson, 7).

Bakhtin takes this argument on ethics one step further to state that "the opposition of 'social' to 'individual' is a false one." Dividing life into sections of social and individual is exactly the sort of abstraction which Bakhtin finds fault with in theoretism. He claims that "the real phenomena of life are not reducible to these opposing categories...life is not a synthesis of social and individual." It is rather a "'live entity' which precedes and transcends the synthesis..."

Bakhtin does not deny the fact that in this world there are vast amounts of generalizations, rules, and norms. The term he uses in reference to these is "theoretical knowledge." Even though this theoretical knowledge exists and is unopposable, it is important not to lose oneself in it: "the world of theoretical knowledge has its place, and it can neither be reduced to our own interests nor reformulated to accord with our moral sense" (Morson, 17). Here Bakhtin introduces yet another term: "acknowledgement" (*priznanie*). Acknowledgement is the personal assessment of theoretical knowledge and is what saves us from being lost in that deep quagmire of generalized information. It is, in a sense, one's identity, or, as Bakhtin likened it to, a personal "signature" to knowledge. With acknowledgement

comes making choices--constantly assessing and reassessing information--and that means responsibility. Bakhtin finds fault with ideologies which avoid responsibility by accepting theoretical knowledge as their gauge for moral principle. He calls such systems "pretenders" and includes with them those which are "ritualized" or "represented" by political and religious affiliations (Morson, 19). Communism under the Soviet Union fits precisely into the role of pretender. Not only did Soviet attempts at communism seek to establish theoretical knowledge (systematic ethics, generalized principles) as the basis on which to build an entire country, but the Party went so far as to discourage and punish any attempts at acknowledgement by individuals. In essence then, the Party denied, in Bakhtinian terms, the pursuit of personal identity.

Bakhtin defends the necessity of the pursuit of individuality by proving that it is vital for the healthy evolution of society. It is the fresh perspective, or "creative understanding," of the individual which contributes newness, thus advancing humanity. This can only be done by maintaining one's singularity outside of the world of theoretical knowledge. Bakhtin here uses the Russian term *vzhivanie* ("live entering" or "living into"). *Vzhivanie* is similar in definition to sympathy, but carries an overtone of physical action rather than thought. With *vzhivanie* , one "enter's another's place while still maintaining one's own place, one's own 'outsidedness,' with respect to the other" (Morson, 11). This way of living is later referred to by Bakhtin as "I for Myself." It implies the priority of personal belief and the "eventness" of action over the beliefs of general society and abstract rules. *Completely* putting oneself in another's place can only lead to stagnancy; it lends

nothing new, but only reinforces the old. This way of living is called "I for Others."

Party attempts in the Soviet Union to establish a mass consciousness through a system of imposed rules and norms caused a large rift between the public (social) and the private (individual). The individual was suppressed in favor of the public and the Revolution. This only added to the stagnancy of a country which sought to *move forward.* It also contributed to the identity crisis of the nation. And nowhere else was it so keenly felt as in the arts, an area built on the principle of *personal* expression. The following section of this research centers on the "unwritten" autobiography of Olga Berrgoltts (1910-1975). The poems which I used to recreate her autobiography are initially characterized by being distinctly divided into two spheres: public and private. This division remains until WW II and the 900-day siege of Leningrad when the public and private voice of Berrgoltts' poetry merges into one. This apparently came about due to the inability of the mass consciousness of the Soviet Union (the quagmire of theoretical knowledge) to fulfill the individual, emotional needs of the citizens in Leningrad and the entire country, which were multiplied and intensified greatly with the tragedy and suffering of the War.

V. The Transition from Private to Public in the Poetry of Olga Berrgoltts

Olga Berrgoltts was born in the year 1910 in what was at that time still St. Petersburg, later to be renamed Petrograd in 1914 and then Leningrad in 1925. She was born into a family of the "intelligentsia" - her father was a doctor. Despite the

fact that her father would later pick of the banner of the revolution, join the Red Army, and participate in the suppression of the Kronstadt revolt, these upper class roots would later return to haunt Berrgoltts during the Stalinist purges of 1937, when she was arrested under suspicion of being "bourgeois" and a German spy. It was her father's close relations to the working class which helped to form her generous, sympathetic outlook on life and her feeling of closeness to mankind. It was her father who first exposed her to the cause of the revolution and the building of the "new world, " as can be discerned from her recollections of her first Communist "saturdays" (*subbotniki*), days set aside for volunteer work:

> We had set out for the forest in search of fuel for the city's only, tiny power station...the adults cut down trees, the older students gathered brushwood, and the young ones were responsible for gathering pine cones and at the same time leaves of lily of the valley for the pharmacy. Not only the adults, but also the children knew for what we were working and felt what one feels when doing extraordinary work, enjoyable work - not at all like working in one's own potato bed. We understood that in some way the bunches of leaves "for medicine" and the growing, rustling mountain of pine cones gathered by us "so that there would be light" was related to the fact that "papa fights against the Whites." Returning from these saturdays we sang loudly and clearly with the adults: "Our world, a new world we will build..." And the thought of being presented with the prospect of accomplishing something enormous, incredible - to build some kind of whole new world - it causes even even a child's soul to tremble and be proud.
>
> (Khrenkov, 221)

This was the sort of enthusiasm for socialism which was instilled in Berrgoltts and in the other children of her generation. They were the first receptors

of the new socialist doctrine adopted by their parents. Theirs were the impressionable young minds which the Party needed to create the "mold." Out of this mold would be cast the future generations of the new world and the new mass consciousness. Berrgoltts and her peers became the first members of the new group of pioneers, a group similar in structure to the American Boy or Girl Scouts, but a bit more dogmatic in cause and doctrine. After being pioneers they would graduate to become full-fledged Komsomol members. It was in the Komsomol that young adults became active participants in the promotion of the new society under socialism in the Soviet Union. Here, in her first published poem, one sees the seriousness with which Berrgoltts accepted the cause:

> It is you, pioneers, who will take
> The world by the reins in the future.
> It is you, pioneers, who will carry
> Beams of starlight in you hearts.
> You - our bright heat lightning,
> You - full if spark and song...
> You young, proud birds
> Of the impending worldwide spring...
> In each of you rings and foams
> The breath of Great October days...
> Beneath the banner of Leninists
> It summons other proletarian children!....
> (1925)

The collective "you" (*vy*) seen here is the companion of the collective "we" (*my*) that is found in many of her other published verses of this period. These forms of address were direct reflections of the mass consciousness and the emphasis on the *collective* which was promoted by the Party. In order to achieve the goals of socialism, the needs of the individual had to be placed second after the needs of the socialist

system, the conglomerate "we." Collective experience was placed before individual experience; one was generally denied the right to any individual experience which was any different from that of the masses. Collective ownership of thought and material property was also given priority: "*Our* world, a new world *we* will build."

This passion and excitement for the new and perfect drove and inspired Berrgoltts. She pursued a career in journalism, which eventually gave her the opportunity to travel and to witness the many social, industrial, and technological advances in the Soviet Union. In 1926 she became a courier for the "Red Newspaper" in Leningrad. At that time she was studying at the Art History Institute in the higher classes of artistry. Being only 16 years old and a student (female nonetheless) it was still considered by society rather odd for her to choose to work. Yet these out-dated societal norms were slowly changing in the "new world" and Berrgoltts possessed a very strong desire to gain as much knowledge as possible about the changes occurring around her and about her people. Working in a newspaper allowed her to do just that.

At that time Berrgoltts was also a member of the literary circle called *Smena*, which means "shift" or "transition." This circle was the breeding ground for the new style of Soviet writing, socialist realism. And a "shift" it was, indeed, from the former styles of writing in Russia. Suddenly, there was only one correct way to write. Romanticism and classicism were gradually giving way to more avant-garde forms of writing such as futurism. The new society called for a new literature:

> Such altered condition in social life will impart a radically different aspect to literary productions...the vast mass of inane productions - the evidences of spoiled taste, often possible only through sacrifices at the altar of the author's vanity - are gone...four-fifths of all literary productions could disappear from

the market without loss to a single interest of civilization.
(Bebel, 333)

What was left was the "new inspiration." Literary content and style was dictated by the Party and focused on the social, technological, and industrial revolutions which gripped the nation. It was on such things that the members of *Smena* focused their literary activities. The group had as its role models such figures as Alexander Blok, Vladimir Mayakovsky, Nikolai Tikhonov, and Boris Pasternak. This was the first generation of Soviet literature. Berrgoltts' generation was to be the second and was responsible for carrying the torch even one step further, and, as the following verse relates, they were willing to give their all:

Life is beautiful
and the world is not in the least bit scary,
And if it's only necessary - again and again
We will give our youth-
for our
Republic, labor, and love.
"Guarantee"

It was through *Smena* that the public first received a glimpse of the private side of Berrgoltts' poetry which had always existed, but which she had kept entirely to herself. This was the very lyrical, intimate poetry which was scattered throughout her diaries. In these verses she expressed her personal thoughts and feelings concerning love, hate, and sorrow - things which were considered superfluous in the context of the new Soviet style. This poetry was *her self*-expression, created out of the responsibility to maintain her identity and perspective. It could feasibly be said that her inspiration was her "subconscious responsibility."

The first poem which Berrgoltts recited to *Smena* was an odd choice, considering the audience, but it reflects her need for the public approval of her

private self:

> I am a stone duck,
> I am a stone pipe,
> I sing simple songs.
> Small breaths quietly
> Lean towards my lips,
> And you hear my song.

This is clearly a diversion from the flag-waving odes she sang to the young pioneers. This is a personal critique of those hidden verses. In light of the "greater" cause of the Revolution, which was the poetical subject of the era, she felt her private poetry to be "simple." Indeed, that was one of the adjectives used by others to describe her work. Her poetry was criticized for being trite and simplistic - not even close to the quality of Mayakovsky and Tikhonov. Her "simpleness" and naivete were attributed to her youth and members of *Smena* chose to dismiss it politely (Khrenkov, 233). This is a prime example of how the "I for Others" took priority over the "I for Myself" in early Soviet poetry and society in general. Her personal expression (her individual identity) was not important in a society caught up in the achievement of "perfect" theoretical knowledge and the triumph of the public over the private.

In 1930 Olga Berrgoltts moved to Alma Alta, Kazakhstan to work as a traveling correspondent with the newspaper "Soviet Steppe." Many writers at that time devoted themselves and their talent to the revolution in such a way. They traveled to cities of experimental industrialization and collectivization and to the construction sites of power stations to report on the progress of the new society. Of this experience Berrgoltts said that "it is important for us to look steadfastly in the face of any region, not because we prefer it, but because every region, with all of

its peculiarities, is simply a small-scale version of our entire Union" (Khrenkov, 247).

But for all of her support and enthusiasm for the revolution, even in Kazakhstan did her personal expression prevail in her private verse. The fact that she met her second husband, Mikhail Molchanov, in Alma Alta contributed much of the inspiration for that expression (her marriage to Boris Kornilov, whom she met through *Smena*, was a short and unhappy one). Mikhail Molchanov was a very important figure in her life. He filled the roles of friend, lover, and supportive critic. In 1931 she left Kazakhstan, expecting a child. Molchanov remained there for a period of time to work (Khrenkov, 261). Berrgoltts returned to Leningrad and there wrote one of her most touching poems, full of love and loneliness, whose opening four lines clearly reflect the duality of Berrgoltts' life:

> Work, the everyday grind, competition,
> The habit of faithful labor.
> Yet memories of you sometimes
> Get in the way of my living.

She is acknowledging the Party mandate - that labor and advancement of society should come first and be fulfilling enough in and of itself to satisfy a person in life. She acknowledges this, but she does not accept it as part of her own philosophy. She is preserving her own identity, the "I for myself," by not denying that her love for Molchanov does, in fact, take precedence in her life. She goes on to describe her restlessness in detail:

> A random, empty occurrence,
> Someone's face, a sound,
> Suddenly starts tormenting my heart,
> Suddenly stops the flow of my blood.

It's as if I'm standing barefoot
On the evil sands of Kazakhstan,
And there's no water and no one knows
That my life is hanging by a thread,
That in a moment of weakness,
Be it only for a day, for awhile,
There's nothing in the world more important
Than my longing for you.

"There's nothing in the world more important / Than my longing for you." This clearly was not dictated by the Communist Party. This poem is saturated with an "I", opposed to the "we" of the typical Soviet frame of mind. Such "greed" and self interest were not tolerated very well by Party leaders and later, in stricter times, often resulted in being expelled from the Writer's Union. However, the Party certainly could not dictate her feelings, and they just as certainly could not suppress her need to express them and create from them her poetry, her "sacred craft."

Another example of Berrgoltts' personal expression crossing Party lines is the following poem, written when she was pregnant with her first child:

I'm drifting off to sleep. My hands are placed,
Peacefully placed on my stomach.
There life is flowing through my veins,
And every part of me is alive...

I'm drifting off to sleep...It seems to me that my bed
Is a boat. And I am lying in the bottom...
A midnight-blue fir tree
Bends poppies towards.

Oh, how the perch beat against the reeds,
The water is warm like a body...
A fragile cupola of starry glass
Sails around above me.

I most likely made myself of earth,
Of warm reeds and water...
Something warm beats beneath my hand,
Is that you my son, my golden perch?
-1928

First of all, the fact must be acknowledged that the Soviet view of sexuality was a very conservative one. Women were meant to have babies in order to increase the population and create a larger work force to further the work of the revolution. Personal emotions were not supposed to be attached to the reproduction process. There is no mention of a "little pioneer" inside of Berrgoltts. There is no mention of the future of the revolution growing and moving beneath her hand. There is something entirely different, something very intimate and lyrical.

It is interesting that nature is the chosen medium through which Berrgoltts relates the sensation of pregnancy. Nature and the "Motherland" have forever been found in Russian and Soviet literature, but it was used in order to arouse feelings of patriotism and revolutionary fervor rather than to describe the sensation of the miracle of life. Berrgoltts here draws very intimate parallels between nature and herself: "Life is flowing through *my* veins...*I* am most likely made of earth...of warm reeds and water..." Here again she is using "I" instead of the "we" which was promoted by the Revolution. The poem revolves around her. Its area is very centralized. Berrgoltts' poetry, including the sample above, was looked upon as being odd, freakish, and a hindrance to the advancement of the new society. This poem in particular was never published in any of Berrgoltts' collections. It was printed only after her death in the biographical work by Khrenkov.

The ten years between her return to Leningrad and the beginning of World War II Berrgoltts spent writing in various genres, most of it connected with children's literature. She edited the children's page of the newspaper *Electrosila* and wrote a number of short stories. The short stories which she wrote for children were centered around the Revolution and sought to explain to youth the great industrial advances taking place in the Soviet Union, so that they "understand the importance and impact of today's accomplishments." For example, her story "On How Vanya Fought With Rams" tells where mittens, boots, and fur coats come from. *Uglich*, (published in 1932 in the journal *Young Guard*) is an account of her childhood in the village of Uglich and of her first exposure to the Revolution. All of this work was done for the public in the public sphere ("I for Others"). Little of her private work was appreciated at this time. The one work which was published, *Glubinka* (1932), an account of her impressions of Kazakhstan, was brushed off, as her poetry was earlier, as being an "amateur attempt" at writing (Khrenkov, 248).

Berrgoltts fell victim to the Stalinist purges of the 30s. In 1937 she was arrested under suspicion of having "bourgeois" roots (based on the fact that her father was a doctor) and of being a German spy (based on her German last name). This was the only the beginning of the very tragic period in her life. She was released in 1939, but soon again would be a "prisoner" - in the blockade of Leningrad during World War II.

Leningrad (St. Petersburg) had long stood as a bastion of the cultural integrity and pride of Russia and then the Soviet Union. Designed and built by Peter the Great in the first half of the 18th century, it was intended to be a window

to the "West," the "Versailles of the north." Magnificent structures built by Rossi and Rostrelli were home not only to the royal family prior to 1917, but also to many writers, composers, painters, sculptors, poets (St. Petersburg was the beloved city of Alexander Pushkin), and scientists who were the pride of this cultural and political capital. It was also witness to numerous revolutionary activities: the Decembrist uprising of 1825, the assassination of Alexander II in 1881, and the Bloody Sunday of 1905. In 1917, after the October Revolution, the Bolsheviks moved the political capital back to Moscow, where it had been located prior to Peter the Great. Yet the cultural roots of the country were so deeply embedded that they were not easily extracted and Leningrad continued to be the cultural center of the Soviet Union.

When the Germans invaded the Soviet Union in 1941, they knew that Leningrad was the real prize, not Moscow. They knew that by destroying Leningrad they would destroy the country's pride and morale. And that is precisely what they intended to do. On August 26th German troops reached the town of Mga, just outside of Leningrad (approximately 2 miles), completing the encirclement of the city, and the 900-day siege officially began (Salisbury). The pride of Russia, population 2,500,000, was completely cut of from the rest of the country. On September 8 the Nazis strategically bombed the major food warehouses of the city, giving rise to bread rations which, at the bleakest point of the siege, would dip as low as 125 grams a day (about one slice). Starvation drove people to eating cats, dogs, and at times even the dead. The winter of 1941 was one of the worst for an entire century. Temperatures dropped to 50 degrees below zero. Without electricity for heat, people were forced to burn fences, furniture, and various wooden debris for

heat. When that ran out, apartments began to freeze (Inber, 42). Disease and malnutrition were widespread. Bodies piled up in makeshift morgues on the streets. There was no wood to build coffins for proper burial and, even if there had been, the living had not the energy to dig graves for the masses which were dying. The little energy that people had left was divided between venturing out into the freezing weather to collect their bread rations, scavenging for wood, and hurrying to the bomb shelters at the sound of the sirens, which had become far too familiar. By the end of the siege, the number of people who died as a result of either disease, starvation, or bombing in the city of Leningrad reached over 1 million - approximately half the city's population.

There were many citizens of Leningrad who, upon news of the approach of German troops, opted to evacuate to safer regions of the Soviet Union. Kazakhstan, for example, was a common destination for people who had the means to relocate. For the most part, those people with "means" were those with political connections or with relatives in other cities. Olga Berrgoltts had the opportunity to leave Leningrad more than once, both before the blockade was complete and then at what was the darkest hour, the winter of 1942. Yet she did not. She was one of those people who knew the importance of fortifying Leningrad and defending it, if only with sheer will power and pride, in order to preserve the morale of the country.

Berrgoltts also felt that, besides her mere presence, she had something more to offer the people of Leningrad. Writers remaining in Leningrad put their skills to use wherever they could for the sake of defending the city. Some served as correspondents to the front. Others took part in compiling and distributing

motivational flyers and pamphlets concerning proper procedures in the event of attack. Berrgoltts herself contributed poetry to the special edition of *Leningrad Pravda* "for the construction of a defense." This special newspaper was created to support the many people of Leningrad who had gone to the front to aid in the enforcement of Leningrad's defense. She also wrote informational verses to accompany the drawings of V. Slyshenko and N. Ignat'evym, which appeared on posters throughout the city, concerning the correct procedures to follow during incendiary bombing (Khrenkov, 296). All of this was done to promote the physical survival of Leningrad's occupants. However, physical well-being was only a *small* part of what the city needed to stay alive. It thirsted to retain its moral and artistic integrity--something with which it had identified itself for centuries. The people of Leningrad went to great lengths to maintain their spiritual strength in the face of great loss and suffering. As Vera Inber documents in her war diary, academic activity continued during the war, despite the severe conditions:

> 25th November, 1941
> Yesterday, while firing was going on in the air and from the ground, Boris Yakovlevich (our hospital chief) faced the learned Council, defending his thesis, in the shelter...(33).

Music also contributed much to the motivation of the blockade prisoners. Concerts at the Philharmonic were continued as far into the winter as was possible, as Inber describes:

> *7th December, 1941*
> Beethoven's Fifth Symphony and Tchaikovsky's Overture 1812. The Philharmonic Hall is becoming increasingly somber and hellishly cold...Some members of the orchestra wear quilted jackets and some wear half-length sheepskin coats...the drummer has the best of it. He warms himself by striking blows on his drums... (Inber, 34)

Through the arts and intellectual stimulation people were able to retain their sanity, albeit only a very slight sense of normalcy, and cling to life.

The radio also played a significant role in maintaining a link between the isolated captives of Leningrad and life. Telephones had been disconnected in September of 1941, thus the only remaining connection between starving people in their frozen apartments was the radio. Berrgoltts described the importance of the radio in the following way:

> Already by the end of November the first coffins appeared on the city streets. They weren't carried as coffins ought to be, - importantly, high above the sidewalk, but rather slid right along the snow on sleds...One region of the city after another plunged into darkness, similar to a polar night, - energy dried up, light left the city, all movement was transfixed. People became weaker and weaker. Many could no longer make long trips on foot and all day long lay motionless, fulling clothed under blankets in their dark, frozen apartments....the Nazis had blockaded every person separately....And through it all it seemed that for every weakened, half-dying *Leningradets* there existed only one tie to the outside world - the *tarelka* radio. From this black circle on the wall the sound of a human voice reached people. This meant that one was still not alone! This meant that somewhere beyond the walls of the apartment people are still living, the city is still living, the country - they are fighting, they are resisting..." (Khrenkov, 302).

Through that "black circle on the wall" the voice of Olga Berrgoltts began to be heard in September, 1941. She had approached the head of the Leningrad division of the Writer's Union and asked where she could be of assistance. She was told that they were organizing and encouraging as many writers as possible to read their work over the radio. To keep the radio waves constantly busy was becoming an increasingly difficult task as people were evacuating the city, going to the front, dying in large numbers, or simply too weak to do more than menial tasks.

Berrgoltts' relationship to her listening audience was a very special one. She was a woman speaking to an audience of mostly women (almost all men were called to the front). She knew exactly what every one of those people was living through because she was living through it, too. Through this intimate understanding, Berrgoltts was finally able to present the private side of her work, of her identity, and have it be understood. The people of Leningrad were no longer interested in listening to the voices of high officials dictating their propagandist messages. They were interested in listening to the voice of someone who understood, someone who was not afraid to express emotion in any form, whether it be love, anger, hate, or doubt. The private poetry of Olga Berrgoltts did just that:

> From heart to heart.
> only this path
> I choose for you. It is straight and terrifying.
> Impetuous. From it one cannot return.
> It is seen by all yet not adorned with praise.
>
> I speak for all who died here.
> Their hollow footsteps are in my verse.
> Their eternal, scorching breath.
> I speak for all who live here,
> who walked through fire and death and ice.
> I speak like your skin, people,
> By law of shared suffering.

"By law of shared suffering" Berrgoltts was justified in taking on the role of being the "voice" and speaking for all who were alive or dead. "I" now became interchangeable with "we" in her poetry. There grew an increased understanding through the "brotherhood" of the blockade which merged the two worlds of public and private. Here, once again, we see the process of "live entering." Berrgoltts shared

the same experience as the rest of those who remained in Leningrad and at the same time maintained her personal perspective. In was her unique viewpoint, her "signature," to that common experience that made her war poetry and radio broadcasts something special and out of the ordinary - something which could give people motivation to live. The same laconic style of poetry which was criticized in earlier years for being too simple and emotional was now reaching into the cold apartments of Leningrad and giving people hope for life:

> Oh yes, we've discovered an enormous happiness -
> It's still not glorified enough, -
> Having shared the last crust,
> the last pinch of tobacco;
> Having carried on midnight conversations
> near the feeble, smoky fire,
> about how we will live when victory comes,
> valuing our entire life in a new way...
>
> from *February Diary*
> 1942

At times her poetry would take on a decidedly somber tone. As the siege continued through not one, but two winters, it became increasingly difficult for Berrgoltts to maintain the strength necessary to continue fulfilling her obligations on the air waves. In addition to working on the radio, she was also looking after her husband, Nikolai Molchanov, who had grown seriously ill. Molchanov had served at the front during the beginning of the war, but soon returned home, suffering from bouts of epilepsy. The Party and the radio administration tried to help Berrgoltts and her husband evacuate, but every time they tried to make plans something arose at the radio station with her broadcasting which made it impossible for her to leave. Eventually Molchanov's condition worsened to the point where he could not be

evacuated. On January 29, 1942, Molchanov died (Khrenkov, 308).

One characteristic of Berrgoltts' poetry that was never lost at any point in her life was its honesty. She described what she saw and said what she felt: "Not by thought nor by act will I lie." And while her goals and intentions for staying in Leningrad revolved around raising the spirits of its suffering inhabitants, she never masked the truth of the situation in doing so. Therefore, the massive grief which she experienced upon the death of her husband was not concealed:

January 29, 1942

And will there really be victories for me?
In what will I find atonement?
Let them leave me and forget me.
I will live alone - always and everywhere
In your last, dark delirium...

Love and cares of any sort I do not need.
Right now I am more in need of bread:
To stand over Leningrad's grave of brothers
In silence, having grown numb.

But you wanted me to love the living,
To be angry, to be happy, to live
With all possible human and womanly strength,
To spend that strength completely
On songs, on empty wishes
On anger...

Berrgoltts felt herself to blame in the death of her husband, although there was nothing she could have done to save him. The tragedy of war planted in her and in everyone a certain feeling of angry helplessness. Those who still had the capacity to move and function did everything they could to aid in the survival of others, but it never seemed to be enough.

Despite the loss of her husband (and her daughter, Irina) during the war, Berrgoltts retained that inspiration which inclined her to remain in Leningrad from the beginning, as the following poem describes:

You sent me into the desert, -
No path whatsoever lay ahead.
You left me and said
- I am testing you. Go.
What the hell, I went...I went as I knew how,
it was terrifying and bitter - Forgive me!
I fell and was singed,
I wearied towards the end of the path.
I don't know why you
gave me this trial.
I didn't ask for an answer -
I panted, I matured, I went on.
Here I am before you once again, -
look straight into my heart.
Repeat those dear words:
- I am testing you. Go.
1937-1941

She was able to continue, though weary, and still inspire others with her patriotism. She never wavered in her belief that the Soviets would be victorious and that the revolution would roll on:

No, land, you will not be given
Into captivity, into the claws of death -
Not as long as even one single heart
of a Leningrad Bolshevik is beating.

But it was not until the spiritual needs of Soviet society as a whole coincided with the personal expression of her verses that it valued and accepted them thirstily. Society before that time had not read Berrgoltts with the "creative understanding" necessary to see the value in her work. It was a society based on

empathy, on achieving a mass consciousness. The tragedy of WW II and the horrific siege of Leningrad brought personal experience and group consciousness together. The pain and suffering of one was experienced by all. The personal expression of Berrgoltts' own pain and suffering could be related to by all and was adopted as the representative (the voice) of the city, indeed, the entire nation. A. Pavlovsky, the author of a book about Olga Berrgoltts entitled *Verse and Heart*, best summarizes this achievement of Berrgoltts' real potential and her place in the scheme of history: "Man and time should become level to one another. Only then does the slow needle on the dial of history point out to people their 'hour of stardom.' That 'hour of stardom' for Olga Berrgoltts and her poetry was during the blockade" (Khrenkov, 270).

VI. Conclusion

The concept of a double life was addressed in both segments of this research, first in the 19th century works of Karolina Pavlova and then in the Soviet period poetry of Olga Berrgoltts. This division between the public and private identities of both authors caused a conflict - a glaring discrepancy between who society wanted them to be and who they perceived themselves as being. Such a discrepancy in the images of two talented, sensitive artists could hardly be overlooked. The alienation from socially prescribed roles contributed to the ever-present desire to write, converging in a written reflection of the self. In order to do this, it was necessary for the private "I for Myself" to override the imposed framework of societal norms and standards, "I for Others." This happened in both cases, resulting in the unofficial, or "unwritten" autobiographies of Pavlova and Berrgoltts. Pavlova's expression took the form of poetry/prose written in the third person. Berrgoltts wrote herself into her many unpublished poems in the first person. Despite the varying roles and destinies of the public voices of Pavlova and Berrgoltts, the private voice found in their "unwritten" autobiographical works served the same purpose: to voice thoughts and feelings (individuality) which were denied them in the public sphere of their lives.

To be a woman in 19th century Russia meant to occupy a prescribed position, usually either that of wife or mother. Women were dependent socially and economically upon men, thus marriages were created out of necessity and convenience - very much on a public level rather than the intimate, private level which is the norm today. For men success depended greatly on social status. In

order to advance oneself socially it was necessary to make the right acquaintances and form the right contacts. Thus it was important not only for the husband, but also the wife/mother to be socially adept, for entertaining and visiting was not simply entertaining and visiting, but also business networking - again, life centered on the public sphere.

For a woman in that environment to pursue a creative literary career simply did not fit into the scheme of things. This was especially true in the case of Karolina Pavlova's work, which diverged sharply from the superficial society tales to the highly philosophical, introspective poetry such as that found within *A Double Life.* Society could not comprehend nor appreciate the private voice of Pavlova as she tried to express it through her own prose and poetry. The only area of Pavlova's work which was appreciated was her translations - work which, of course, required her talent with foreign languages, but which did not allow her the use of her *personal* expression. Pavlova on all fronts was denied a public voice of her own. She was forced to retreat from that public arena in self defense in order to continue and preserve her private voice. Staying in that society which tried to impose on her its idea of who she was certainly was impossible for a woman whose passion was to write and to create - to occupy her days with her "sacred craft."

The fate of the public voice of Olga Berrgoltts was at once strikingly different and similar to that of Karolina Pavlova. Like Pavlova, Berrgoltts was denied the use of her own public voice. It the years following the October Revolution, the Soviet Party dictated her public voice to her. The Party told her what to write about and when and where to do it. This dictated work, her career in journalism, is the parallel

to Pavlova's work in translation. It was work which required skill, but there was no room for the expression of personal perspective, that "creative understanding" which Mikhail Bakhtin advocated as being so important to a healthy, evolving society. Therefore, Berrgoltts own voice was confined to the confined world of her diaries and poetry. Yet the tragedy of war brought a convergence of public and private in the voice of Berrgoltts, something which failed Pavlova's life. World War II and the siege of Leningrad brought Berrgoltts, the inhabitants of the blockaded city, soldiers, and all of the Soviet Union to the same level. "By law of shared suffering" everything became public. The most painful, intimate experiences of life were felt by everyone and were played out in the public, on the streets. People starved and died on the streets. People scrounged for food, warmed themselves by small fires, waited for their rations of bread, took cover from air raids, and gave humble burials for loved ones - all on the streets. Since Berrgoltts, too, was "living into" these same experiences and making them her life, they became the subject of her poetic inspiration and gave her a public voice of her own. During World War II the uniquely preserved, intimate, lyrical quality of her private verse, which was considered frivolous and unnecessary in the early years of the Revolution, was finally appreciated by society. Thus, her private voice made a successful transition into the public, affirming her personal identity and self expression.

These differing fates of the autobiographical voices of Karolina Pavlova and Olga Berrgoltts illustrate to what extent self expression is controlled by the environment in which the individual lives. Self expression and the search for personal identity can only be controlled to the extent that it cannot, under certain

circumstances, be made public. Regardless of roles and ideals imposed by society, the individual is always able to pursue "the mystery of his [or her] own destiny." When this concerns writers, as was the case in this research, it is inevitable that a society-oppressed self will find a certain amount of gratification by incorporating autobiographical material of some form into their written work.

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Appendix

The following poems were translated in the course of this research project. Some of them were included within the research paper itself, many were not. Due to the fact that the poetry of Olga Berrgoltts remains untranslated into English (with the exception of one poem), I felt that it would be both useful and interesting to include my translations here as a supplement to the research.

-KB

It is you, pioneers, who will take
the world by the reins in the future.
It is you, pioneers, who will carry
beams of starlight in you hearts.
You - our bright heat lightning,
you - full if spark and song...
You young, proud birds
of the impending worldwide spring...
In each of you rings and foams
the breath of Great October days...
Beneath the banner of Leninists
it summons other proletarian children!....

1926

*****

Guarantee

Life is beautiful
and the world is not in the least bit scarey,
And if it's only necessary - again and again
We will give our youth-
for our
Republic, labor, and love.

To Nikolai Molchanov
(A lullaby for my husband)

The stormy night
Is spreading into the darkness.
Let me sing you, husband,
A lullaby.
Lie here - it's warmer
On my shoulder...
Many many days
Will we live together:
Our enemies here
Will be astonished at us,
Every friend
Will praise us...
Out into the last battle
We will walk together,
If death comes -
I will die with you.
If you are wounded suddenly,
Suddenly crippled -
Do not be afraid, friend.
Do not be perplexed, friend:
I will be your nurse
I will be your mama...
Lie here - it's warmer
On my shoulder.
Many many days
We will live together.

I searched the dead city
for that street where we were together,
I found it, yet for all that did not recognize it...
But the blue-grey ashes and rust of the train station!
...there was once a blue, blue day,
and it smelled stuffily of oil,
and the ornate shade of the grey acacia shook...
From the railroad ties arose a sultry heat, visible like glass,
The nearby ocean breathed, but my friend,
already a stranger, nevertheless beloved,
did not release my cold hands.
I knew everything! Words, arguments,
tender meetings no longer existed.
And, regardless,
there will be a time -
one of us will return to this city
and everything that was will live again.
Blissful southern air will caress one's face,
the unforgettable heat will catch in one's throat.
On the bank appears the image of my friend,
ineradicable joy of the earth.
Oh, if someone standing there beside us
had whispered, "how the years fly!"
Indeed only now, looking at these stones,
I understand what the word "never" means.
That the past does not exist,
that its witnesses are lost,
that, for myself and for all,
traces of the path to the wasteland are lost

1947

*****

I don't know, I don't know. I live and don't know,
when I will succeed, when I will break forth in song
in the midst of my azure, sacred, best song,
all black at the edges.
What will it be about? I don't know, I don't know...
But the surf at the seaside knows,
And the sacred flock of homeless gulls,
And my heart, which is only with you.
I secretly and bitterly envy,
but wait - don't leave.
I would be to you a stranger
not having known these wastelands:
prior to this deadly summer,
when you and I met,
before the sad praise, before
half of this heart was stolen by winter.
To think - it is like a splinter,
grief, stirs in the chest...
...I am becoming simple and happy, -
Repeat to me that you love, repeat!

1945-1964

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From heart to heart.
only this path
I choose for you. It is straight and terrifying.
Impetuous. From it one cannot return.
It is seen by all and not adorned with praise.
I speak for all who died here.
Their hollow footsteps are in my verse.
Their eternal, scorching breath.
I speak for all who live here,
who walked through fire and death and ice.
I speak like your skin, people,
By law of shared suffering.

With this open page
I want to address today
all of you living far away.
I want to say that I haven't forgotten,
I haven't ceased loving any of you
who may very well have forgotten me.

I believe, tender ones, that all of you are living,
that you are strong and proud and handsome.
If any of you are morose and lonely,
here is my address - maybe it will be of use to you? -
Troitskaya street, number 7, apartment 30.
Knock. The doorbell doesn't work.

Do not be afraid, I won't take on too much:
I'll meet you at the threshold,
seat you right away in the corner with the saints' images.
I will inquire as to your misfortunes,
if you don't have tears - I'll cry for you,
if you don't have a smile - I'll awaken your heart.

It may be that I will have enough strength for all,
that, preserving the legacy of youth,
I will cease loving none of you,
I will forget none of you,
you, who have not forgotten me.

A Promise

And so I chose for farewell
the saddest words.
In parting I shook many hands,
out of a grief not dead, but living.

Only I have not yet sung about you,
about the one and only in my life;
I cannot entrust to words empty and awkward
a song about you.

Because your complete, enormous friendship,
your entire, beautiful love, Homeland,
I will always recognize
in the trust, love, and friendship of my husband.

All of your reproaches and worries,
all the cares of your heart...
Even your image, familiar and strict,
is inseparable from his.

The helmet shadows his fierce brow,
The Milky Way flows along his bayonet...
Who is more loved and severe
than the Red Army soldier standing guard?

For who else is there a word more true,
a song more beautiful - for who?
Forty times I will sing anew for others
and, at once, for one.

But with such pride and strength,
so that everyone shuddered: beauty!
So that pure happiness like a great altitude
would steal my breath away...

I walk along the place of battle.
I walk along our street.
Here my heart was left
in that great, fierce war.

Here we lived together.
Our home was not a home, but a pillbox,
The windows of the corner room -
were ambrasures for machine guns.

And everthing which surrounded us -
flame and ice,
        and rickety roof, -
was our love, my friend,
our ruin, life, blood.

In that year,
        in that delirium,
                in that frenzy,
in that primitive ice,
I will find you, my heart,
maybe for the worse.
But such a heart,
        in that ice,
                in that fire,
Is needed by me now more than ever...
My friend,
        heart of mine,
                look back:
We do not walk alone,
Yes, our generation walks
along the place of battle,
and still unknown to us -
everyone will pass through those same places,
remembering, just as we, what happened there,
with the same steel prayer they will pass...

Answer

But I tell you that none of my years
are lived in vain,
None of my chosen paths prove unnecessary,
No news is heard for nothing.
There are no unperceived worlds,
no distributed gifts have missed their mark,
Neither is there vain love -
no deceived love, no unhealthy love,
its imprishable, pure light
is always in me,
        always with me.
And it is never too late
to begin anew an entire life,
        to begin the entire journey,
and in a way so that not one word,
not one groan of the past be crossed out.